

Copy 12 - from the author -

THE IMPORTANCE
OF
PRESERVING UNVIOLATED
THE
SYSTEM OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT
IN EVERY STATE:

WITH THE
DREADFUL CONSEQUENCES
OF THE
VIOLATION OF IT.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
AN APPENDIX,
CONTAINING
SOME STRICTURES
ON THE
WRITINGS
OF
MR. P A I N E.

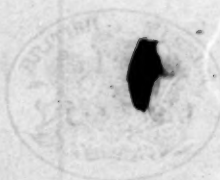
BY THE REV. JAMES BROWN.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AND SOLD BY J. DEBRETT,
OPPOSITE BURLINGTON-HOUSE, PICCADILLY;
AND W. RICHARDSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1793.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.



10 47/9
93

TO THE
A S S O C I A T I O N
AT THE
C R O W N A N D A N C H O R,
And other ASSOCIATIONS for preserving
Liberty, Property, and Public Order.

GENTLEMEN,

THE following Publication is intended to further the same laudable and important design which is the object of your Institution. Should it be distinguished by your Notice, it might in some degree obviate that suspicion of triteness which, perhaps too deservedly, lies against every thing that is known to originate from the pulpit.

The original occasion of what is here published, was certainly much out of the way of common pulpit exhibitions; and the Author at least endeavoured to take advantage of the occasion. Whether he has succeeded so far as to render what he has written publicly interesting in the *manner and form*, he cannot determine; the *matter and subject* is certainly highly interesting to the

the public, in the present spirit and disposition of the inhabitants of this country. And as it is professedly part of the design of your Institution to promote the circulation of such writings as may tend to deter from public Tumult, Riot, and Confusion, and to encourage Peace, Good-order, and due subjection to Government; if you think the following adapted to forward these purposes, the sanction of your approbation may contribute to give it greater influence, and to diffuse more widely its good effects.

I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Very respectfully,

Your humble Servant,

JAMES BROWN.

PREFACE.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Discourse was delivered at the opening of the Commons-House-of-Assembly of the Province of Georgia, on the restoration of Civil Government there in the Year 1780, at the desire of the Assembly. And the Author was then requested to print it, by a deputation from the House. But on application being made to the only printer then in the Province; his business having been broke up, and the implements of it dispersed, or destroyed, while the Americans were in possession of the country, it was not in his power to print it. The manuscript has of course lain by among the Author's papers, ever since, without any thought of its again making a public appearance; till the dangerous and threatening aspect of the present times induced him to think of offering it to the public: if haply the dreadful picture of public and private calamity presented in it, and which was drawn immediately from life and actual existence, may have some influence to deter the infatuated, the mad, inhabitants of this country from pursuing those steps that must ever infallibly lead to the same dreadful and deplorable consequences.

The Discourse is now published as it was originally written: insertions, and alterations, more pointedly applicable to the design of its present publication might no doubt have been made; but these would perhaps have hurt its uniformity, and made it seem less directly applicable to its original design. The very few insertions that have been
made

made are marked with a single inverted comma, to distinguish them from some other quotations which are marked with a double inverted comma.

The notes have been chiefly added on the present occasion, and have run to much greater length than was intended. They allude mostly to facts that came within the Author's own knowledge, many of them subsequent to the composing of the original Discourse. With the greater part of those for whom this publication is principally intended, authentic anecdotes, and particular facts, are more palpable, and likely to be more impressive, than arguments or general descriptions; and this, it is hoped, will be thought a sufficient apology for the length and personality of these notes; and particularly for that egotism which they frequently induce; and which is indulged, as leading to a more concise narration, which in them, was what the writer chiefly aimed at.

With a view merely to the present design of this publication, the general introduction might perhaps have been contracted; but the Author was willing to exhibit at least a few copies of the Discourse in its original unmutated form: should these be thought worthy of the public attention, and a greater number wanted, the subsequent copies may in this respect be ordered as the public opinion shall suggest: and may also be published in such a form as to reduce the price as low as the quantity of matter will admit.

The severe critic may perhaps think the general style of this discourse too exuberant, perhaps even glaring: something of this may be owing to the period of life in which it was first composed. But it will, beside, be remembered, that the Discourse was written to be addressed *viva voce* to a popular audience, where some degree of splendour may be not only excusable, but even necessary, to allure attention; and by means of the ear and imagination, to gain access to the understanding and hearts of the audience.

And

And as this was the case when it was originally composed, so now that it is published, it is still principally addressed to popular attention : this it is hoped will be allowed a sufficient reason for not altering the stile, without impeaching the judgment or taste of the author

Had this publication been intended to challenge the eye of severe criticism, the author would probably have thought it necessary, to have shaded some glare, and pruned some redundancies which his own judgment would have pointed out to him, and perhaps even to have begun with the first sentence. A splendid dress may sometimes be the first thing to attract the eye to an object, in which, when we come to contemplate it nearer, we may find many things more engaging and interesting than the splendour of the dress.—It is hoped, on the present occasion, it will nowhere be found that sense or meaning are sacrificed to mere found or show.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE strictures which accompany this Discourse, were thrown together while the former part was in the press ; in great haste, and, consequently, in a very loose connection and order ; though they have run to much greater length than was at first thought of.

The whole was intended to have made its appearance in the general alarm that preceded the meeting of Parliament : but by some delay in preparing for the press, and still greater and more unaccountable delay in the press, it has been so long suspended, that the alarming appearance that suggested the design of publishing it, has now happily in a great measure subsided : But though the immediate appearance of danger may be less, there is reason to suspect that the spirit and disposition from which it arose is not less strong, nor less active, but only obliged to be more cautious of shewing itself, and to work more covertly : indeed the obscurity in
which

which the present danger has been hatched, is perhaps the principal reason of its having got to such a growth unobserved. When a noble Marquis, in the House of Lords the other day, asserted, that among those with whom he conversed he saw no symptoms of danger; he should have recollected, that it is not from such as are so happy as to be honoured with the noble Marquis's conversation and society that the danger is apprehended; it is not such that are likely to be forward in a design to equal all property, and level all distinction. The danger arises from persons of a different description, whom, perhaps, such as the noble Marquis are too apt to overlook; and who may therefore be the more desirous of raising themselves to a distinction that may deserve his notice and attention.

THE IMPORTANCE
OF
PRESERVING UNVIOLATED
THE
SYSTEM OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT
IN EVERY STATE.

I CORINTH. XIV. 33.

GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION, BUT OF PEACE.

WHEN the Almighty Architect of the Universe had finished his works, he surveyed the whole with the eye of unerring wisdom, and discerning them all to be very good, he pronounced a blessing upon them. Thus created perfect, thus blessed by Him whose blessing none can reverse; and still under the superintendency of the same wise, good, and powerful Being; the most unanswerable enquiry that can be suggested to human reason, is, How Evil gained admission into the world; how disorder, confusion, and misery ever found access among the works of a Being of infinite goodness to purpose, of infinite wisdom to plan, and of infinite power to execute what was most supremely good, and most permanently perfect.

A

But

But as it is certain that God neither is, nor can be, either the Author or Approver of confusion, of evil or disorder; it is still no less certain, that evil and disorder have intruded themselves into the creation, and have much marred and deformed the originally good and beautiful works of the Creator. And though this question "From whence Evil*?" has employed, and perplexed the researches of the learned and inquisitive in all ages of the world, they have left the matter nearly as they found it; still as dark and difficult to be accounted for as ever.

But though fully to solve this question seems beyond the reach of human reason, and it may be one of the hidden things of God; yet with respect to the moral world at least, this much we may by the smallest attention plainly discern; that Evil is only to be found where the operations of free agents can have effect. So that wherever disorder, confusion, or misery prevail, it arises not from any necessity in the constitution of things; it proceeds not from any imperfection in the divine plan, or defect in the divine execution, but from the depravity of the human heart, and the perverseness of

* Ποθεν το κακον.

the human will. Should it be said, that this is only removing the difficulty a step further, not getting rid of it; we admit the objection; nor pretend to solve an enquiry, to the solution of which the greatest and wisest of men in all ages have confessed themselves unequal.

On this point however we must still further suggest, that without freedom of will, and choice of action, there could be no such thing as virtue or vice, merit or blame in human character or conduct; there could be no reason or equity in rewards or punishments, no justice or impartiality in the distribution of present or future happiness or misery to mankind. But in contemplating the original plan of nature we must consider man as what God originally made him: for what he has since made himself, he himself only is answerable. The misery he has brought upon his species, and the disorder he has introduced among the works of God, are the effects of his own voluntary actions, not the necessary consequences of the constitution of his nature: and even this evil and misery we hope and believe the same all-provident Goodness will finally expiate and remove*.

A 2

But

* See a publication, intituled, *The Restitution of all Things*, by the Author of this Discourse

But leaving this perplexing and inexplicable question, let us keep to facts.

In every part of nature where the operations of men can have no influence, we see all constant and regular, beautiful and good; all conspiring to useful and salutary ends and purposes, to peace, pleasure, and happiness. The sun is constant to his course; and while he regularly runs the race marked out by his Maker, sheds uninterrupted his grateful influence on this sublunary world. The moon and stars unfailing perform the functions assigned them, and invariably preserve the order appointed by their Creator, day and night, summer and winter, with all the variety of seasons, are regular in their vicissitudes, and faithful to their order; and hence contribute to the beauty, perfection, and happiness of the whole vegetable, animal, and rational creation. Thus in the natural world, man and his operations only excepted, we see all proceed with perfect order and harmony; and that harmony and order always producing good, beauty and happiness.

If from the material, we turn our thoughts to the rational and moral world, and consider the human system simply as constituted by its divine Author, we shall there find the
same

same marks of admirable order and good design that universally characterize the whole works of God. The constituent powers and principles of the human mind, duly regulated, and rightly exerted, compose a truly good and beautiful frame: the natural passions and affections directed to their proper objects, and restrained within due bounds, are all of a wise and beneficent tendency. And reason is ordained as a sovereign, to preside over, to direct, regulate, and restrain their operations; supported by conscience, that inflexible arbiter of right and wrong, possessed of full power to vindicate the authority of reason, and give force and sanction to her dictates and laws. Were the principles and powers of the human mind exerted according to this their natural order, and human conduct and actions regulated according to this their just œconomy, the beauty, order, and good-design of the moral and intellectual world, would be no less conspicuous, and still more interesting, than that of the material world. And to the breach of this order, to the contempt and neglect of this œconomy, is owing all the vice and misery, all the wars, devastation and destruction that have so oft desolated
 and

and laid waste the world. To perverted and unrestrained passions, reason corrupted, and made the slave and pandar of passion, and conscience stifled, or unable to cause its voice to be heard, or its authority to be felt amidst the general tumult and disorder; to these fatal sources may be traced all the confusion and misery, all the guilt and crimes, all the rapine and violence under which the world has so often groaned. "Whence," says St. James, "come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence even of your lusts that war in your members? come they not of your unrestrained, irregular, and unbounded passions?"

If from the human constitution considered in the abstract, or in individuals, we turn our thoughts to human society in general, or the different communities of which it is composed in particular, we shall still find the observation of the text hold true, that "God is not the Author of confusion but of peace." We shall still find the voice of nature and reason, which to man is the voice of God, universally pointing out a certain order and regularity, a certain subordination to laws and lawful authority, as necessary to the peace and prosperity, the security and happiness, of every com-

community, and of every individual member of each community. And such a regularity and subordination we find actually existing in some degree in every society, in every country and nation, from the earliest ages of the world. So that without ascribing the sanction of divine right to any particular form of government in preference to another; we may in general affirm, that a regular government, consisting in an established subjection to laws and lawful authority, to magistrates and rulers supreme and subordinate, is the natural means by which the Divine Providence ordained peace, prosperity, and happiness to be preserved in human society. For what the Divine Providence universally produces by the regular operation of nature and reason, may with as much justice and propriety be reckoned the work of God, as what is the effect of his own immediate agency.

And from an impartial view of human society, we may safely pronounce, that the Sovereign of Nature no more intended the same system of policy, the same mode of rule, the same form of government for every country and people; than the same soil and climate, the same mode of life, the same genius

nius and disposition of the inhabitants. And in every country we justly allow a divine sanction to that government which is by the Divine Providence regularly established there*. St. Paul was plainly of this opinion : hence, writing to the Romans, in one of the most profligate and flagitious reigns that ever disgraced that empire. “ There is “ no power,” says he, “ but of God, the “ powers that be are ordained of God. Who- “ soever therefore resisteth the power, resist- “ eth the ordinance of God : and they that “ resist shall receive to themselves damna- “ tion.” ‘ This is an awful threatening, and ‘ may at first seem boldly and abruptly pro- ‘ nounced by the Apostle. But when we ‘ look steadily into the dreadful train of ‘ crimes and miseries in which resistance to ‘ civil government invariably has, and una- ‘ voidably must, involve all who are concern- ‘ ed in it or connected with it, we must fully ‘ acquiesce in the justness of the Apostle’s

* It will, I presume, be readily perceived, that by a *Divine Sanction* here, nothing more is, or can be, understood than that authority which the laws of God, and the principles of religion justly allow to the established laws and government of every society ; and that obedience and subjection which they require, and enjoin to all that live under the protection of such laws and government.

‘ sentence.

' sentence. At least if there be any guilt
 ' or crime within the compass of human
 ' perpetration, upon which damnation may
 ' absolutely be denounced, we may certainly
 ' say it is this. All other crimes, in the de-
 ' gree of misery which must follow them, in
 ' the extent of disastrous consequences with
 ' which they must be attended : and conse-
 ' quently, in the atrociousness of the guilt
 ' with which they must be charged, are ve-
 ' nial, are innocence itself, compared with
 ' the accumulated crimes and horrors that
 ' with certainty attend internal discord :
 ' even foreign war with all its calamities is
 ' excusable in its guilt, and light in its con-
 ' sequences, when put in the balance with
 ' those of civil war. And no well-establish-
 ' ed government was ever overthrown with-
 ' out a civil war, with all its horrors, mise-
 ' ries and crimes.' Thus, whatever society
 shall suffer themselves to be drawn into the
 contempt and resistance of civil government,
 shall assuredly, in the very natural effects,
 and necessary consequences of their actions
 feel the divine vengeance for such impious
 violation of this sacred and important order
 of nature, and of the God of nature.

B

Thus,

Thus, in every view of things, God is not the Author of confusion but of peace. Good-order and regularity are the universal characteristics of his works; and peace, prosperity, and happiness, the sure and constant effect of the preservation of that regularity and good-order. Confusion and disorder, vice and misery, are the works of men; of men hurried headlong by their own blind humours and impetuous passions: and daring from pride and folly, from avarice and ambition, to break through and violate that sacred and beneficent good-order which the Sovereign of Nature has established as the bond of security and happiness to all his works.

But as God is not himself the Author of confusion, neither will he suffer that beneficent good-order, which he has ordained and established through all his works, to be violated and broke through by men with impunity. It is an important truth, and worthy of the most serious attention, that God hath so laid the general plan of nature, that every violation and breach of her order and laws shall certainly be punished; and punished by its own natural operation and necessary effects. This is indeed the distinguishing

guishing excellency of the eternal laws prescribed by God to nature, that they every where execute and vindicate themselves. For he hath universally so constituted his works, that in every particular order or system, whether natural or civil, it will be found, that whatever is conducive to regularity and good-order, and conformable to the just and natural œconomy of the system, will prove conducive also to its permanency, its prosperity and happiness. And on the contrary, whatever tends to subvert the regularity and good-order, or to interrupt the just and natural œconomy of any system, will be found to subvert also its prosperity and happiness, and to bring ruin and destruction upon that system.

But though this be an universal law, that the Author of Nature hath unalterably established through all his works, in no case is it so conspicuous and strongly marked, as in that of the established system of government in civil society. For in no case is it confirmed by a sanction so clear and certain, in no instance is the breach of it punished by consequences so dreadful and deplorable, in none does the divine vengeance discover itself, by such extensive and undistinguishing

ing ruin and destruction, as in the violation and breach of this sacred and important institution. And why has God set such pointed marks of wrath and displeasure on the violation of an universal law, in this one particular instance? Why? but by such awful examples of the divine vengeance immediately before them, to deter the madness of men from rashly breaking through it, to warn societies to guard it with the most watchful care, and to make them view with horror and alarm every step that seems but to approach towards it. For as there is no law of nature the preservation of which is of so much importance to the universal community of mankind; there is none which ought therefore to be guarded with such zealous care, to be held so sacred and inviolable as the established system of government in every civil society. What source has been productive of so much woe and calamity to the human race! What cause has so often desolated whole countries, and drenched the earth with blood! What has so often set even kindred and friends at hostile variance, made even parents and children plunge their swords in each other's breasts, as the contempt and breach of this divine institution.

Daring

Daring and desperately wicked as the men must indeed be, who can engage in schemes to subvert the civil government of the country in which they live; yet could they foresee, or did they allow themselves to consider, the extended, the accumulated scene of human misery through which they must wade to the attainment of their ends, it would, we might presume, check even the most desperate, and the most daringly wicked would shrink with horror from their purpose. At least we may safely affirm, that were these dreadful consequences seen, and considered, by those who are blindly drawn into their schemes; and who are always the dupes, and too often the victims of their insidious designs, every good citizen, every man of property, every man of common understanding would shrink with horror from such paricides; and they would soon find the due reward of their actions. Especially, were it considered, that in almost every attempt to subvert or change the government of any state, not only have the immediate consequences been dreadful; but in general, the issue has proved entirely ineffectual to the end proposed, or at least pretended, and the attempt fatal to the society

ciety itself. So that however artful and designing men may find their account in public disorder, in attempts to subvert the government of their country, from hopes of raising themselves on its ruins; the body of the people have always had too much reason to repent, and long regret, so desperate an undertaking. And that not only, when, as is generally the case, artful men, devoid of principle and desperate in their fortunes, have under the specious pretence of removing grievances, and rectifying abuses, attempted to embroil and subvert the government; but even when the peaceful and moderate have by real oppression and insupportable tyranny been roused to just resentment, and excited to seek relief in an attempt to change the government by *force* and *violence*; even in this case, the event has seldom been such as could justify the measure, or recommend the example: this may be matter of regret, but it is not the less a truth, and a truth confirmed by almost universal fact and experience.

‘ What then, it will be said, is every species
 ‘ of abuse, every degree of oppression and
 ‘ tyranny to be submitted to with quiet and
 ‘ abject resignation? By no means. But
 ‘ in all moderate governments there are bet-
 ‘ ter

'ter and surer methods of redress than force
 'and violence. A cool, firm, and rational
 'opposition to abuses, steadily and prudently
 'persisted in, will scarce ever fail of success;
 'especially in a government so popular as
 'that under which we live: almost the only
 'thing that can frustrate and disappoint the
 'success of such measures, is want of pa-
 'tience, and precipitating opposition into
 'riot and violence; for then every man of
 'character and principle, who before might
 'desire and endeavour to obtain a redress of
 'abuses, will in this case think it necessary
 'to strengthen the hands of government;
 'as well-knowing that the worst abuses of
 'government must be preferable to such
 'means of reform, or any redress that can
 'be obtained by such means'.—What im-
 provement or advantages did the British
 government derive from the issue of a civil
 war that raged in, and laid waste that
 country for near twenty years in the last
 century? Were not the people glad to re-
 sume their former government, if with some
 appearance of reform in the constitution,
 with still greater abuses in the administra-
 tion than ever? On the other hand, what
 important advantages, what a happy change
 was

was effected by a calm, but firm and spirited proceeding at the glorious revolution in the same century, almost without a sword being drawn, or a drop of blood being shed.

Governments no doubt may grow into such enormous, such universal abuse as may justify resistance, and even a change of the constitution. But this case when ever it shall happen, will always be marked by this particular circumstance, it will be so evident, so immediately pressing, so critically decisive, that all will see, and feel, the necessity of it: consequently, the parties will have entirely changed their ground. It will be no longer a faction seeking to subvert the good-order and government of the society; but it will be the society universally rising to vindicate themselves against a faction assuming an unwarrantable, abusive, and insupportable authority over them. In this case there will be no occasion for force or violence, the change will be effected by the general and voluntary consent of the society, without one good citizen attempting, or wishing, to oppose or prevent it. But, except in a case so critically pressing and decisive as this, every man, who dares but to propose, or point to public violence, is, and ought to be

be considered by all, as a traitor to his country, and a pest to human society. I believe there is not to be found in the records of history an instance of a truly good man, of one who had any real regard for the happiness of his country, in any case, consenting to an attempt to subvert and change the established constitution and government by *violence*: these are the attempts of a Claudius*, a Cataline, a Cromwell; in such designs, a Cicero, a Cato, a Clarendon, were never found engaged.

Reform of abuses, and improvements of government, a real patriot may wish and attempt; but he well knows how dangerous it is to shake pillars, to touch foundations. Men of abandoned characters and desperate fortunes, as before observed, may find their account in the subversion of government, and in throwing society loose from the restraint of laws; because they can lose nothing, but may have some chance to gain amidst the general wreck and confusion. But the body of the people in general, and every man of principle and property in particular, have every thing valuable to lose, and nothing to gain by public confusion.

* Appius Claudius, the Decemvir.

and disorder. And when such allow themselves to be drawn into schemes which tend to subvert public order and tranquillity, they become the certain dupes, either of the ill designs and interested views of others, or of their own folly, avarice, and ambition.

In every view of this subject, then we may safely affirm, that nothing but the utmost tyranny and abuse of all the powers and functions of government, so as to render it destructive of that society for whose welfare it is ordained, can justify, or even excuse, so desperate a step, as an attempt to subvert and change the established constitution and form of government, in any regular society, by tumult and violence.

But if the abuses and causes of discontent, whether real or pretended, exist, not in the form and constitution of the government, but in the œconomy and administration of it, nothing but madness, or the more detestable intention of sacrificing to private selfish views every thing sacred and valuable in society, could suggest even a *pretence* to violate and overthrow the constitution itself. Few governments could be more degenerated, or perversely administered, than the Roman government in St. Paul's days, under

der the cruelty and tyranny of a Nero; yet to this government he readily allows a divine sanction, and enjoins his converts subjection and obedience to it: "Let every soul," says he, "be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God." The abuses and calamities of a perverse administration of government may be but temporary, and in their utmost extent can reach but few; and even in the worst administered government these calamities must be mild and gentle, when compared with the all-involving misery, violence, and outrage, that must attend an attempt to overthrow by force even the weakest established government.

Since, then, the most disastrous calamity that can befall any country, is, the breach and subversion of its civil government; of all objects in which human society are interested, none ought therefore to be held so sacred, to be viewed with such awful forbearance, as the fundamental laws and principles of the state, the established system and form of government in any regular society; every breach of which must certainly be atoned

for by the blood of millions *. Hence, the most fatal pest that the divine vengeance can let loose upon any country or people, is the man who dares attempt to embroil the public, to dissolve the bonds of civil union, and throw society loose from the protection and restraint of law. Every good citizen, every man not void of all principle, will tremble at the thought; nor ought public vengeance to spare for a moment the man, who, in sentiment or action, dares but to point towards such a catastrophe †, if the public itself would escape the severest ven-

* The American war, for a civil war, was but of short continuance; shorter than any can ever be where the parties are entirely mingled in situation and interest; yet I have heard it conjectured, that this war, taken in all its consequences, and all the parties concerned in it, and connected with it, cost above a million of lives. Not that near this number fell in the field; in every war the immediate slaughter of the field makes but a small proportion of the destruction and waste of the species.

† Lest this should be supposed to point particularly to present persons and circumstances, which might be thought to weaken the force of the sentiment in general; it may be necessary to take notice, that this paragraph is *verbatim* from the original copy, and was dictated entirely by a conviction of the natural atrociousness of the case; still indeed more strongly impressed by the deplorable effects of it then immediately before me: not but that present persons and circumstances may well justify the application of it.

geance

geance of Heaven for allowing its sacred order to be violated and insulted with impunity: for a proof of this, we need only appeal to the awful monuments of such vengeance, which this miserable country at present every where presents.

Every intestine war, every attempt to subvert civil government, recorded in history, will sufficiently attest the truth and justice of the above observations, in general: and if we apply them to the present attempt to overthrow the power of that government so long, and so happily established in this country, in particular, the unwarrantable rashness and precipitancy of the undertaking, must even, at first view, strikingly appear. But if we take into the consideration, the many natural advantages of the constitution of that government above any that this or former ages can boast of, the late happy and flourishing state of the country under that constitution, with the personal virtue and moderation of the present Prince on the throne; add, I say, all these considerations, and language must labour in vain to describe the folly, the madness, not to say, the impiety, the wickedness of the attempt. To pretend to describe it to any present, would
unhappily

unhappily be an undertaking not less impracticable, from its extent and atrociousness, than superfluous, from its being already by all but too well known and felt. What subject can engage our thoughts, what intelligence can reach our ears, what object can meet our eyes, that does not present it to us in but too striking colours? To what can we turn our thoughts, but the devastations of war, the general distress and calamity? Of what can we hear, but deeds of horror and outrage, the profusion of human blood, the slaughter of our species? What can strike our eyes, but objects of misery, vestiges of ruin, monuments of guilt and crimes!

But since, in this corner of the land at least, we have now some prospect of a period to these calamities, by the happy restoration of law and legitimate government; since we, here, once more see the supreme legislative body of the province assembled, to consult for the more perfect establishment, and the further extending of the blessings and salutary influence of regularity and good-order: it shall therefore be my aim, in what remains of this discourse, to
excite

excite persons of all ranks and denominations, who can cause their voice to be heard, or their influence to be felt, cordially to unite, and unfeignedly to exert their every effort, for the attainment of these desirable purposes; and for putting an end to our present calamities.

And this I shall do, chiefly, by endeavouring to set before you a brief sketch of the miseries and calamities that have already attended this dispute, and must still attend the further prosecution of it; contrasted with a view of the blessings and happiness which this country formerly enjoyed, and which are the natural effects of good-order, and regular government.

One of the greatest calamities with which any country can be visited, is to be made the seat of war; but to be the seat of an unnatural intestine war, how much more wretched and miserable! And sure no country ever felt all the miseries and calamities of such a state more severely than this has lately done. The sword has ragged with mutual and indiscriminating slaughter from one end of the land unto the other. Brothers have met brothers, fathers their

their children, and friends the friend of their bosom in hostile conflict; and haply have mutually embrued their hands in one another's blood *. The country is depopulated with boundless slaughter, the stench of our camps is come up into our nostrils, the air we breathe is tainted with human carnage, and our land is fattened with gore.

Nor is it those only who are immediately engaged in the maddening scenes of war, who have felt its miseries, who have suffered and bled. The infirm old, and the feeble young, the timorous matron and the tender virgin; the distracted mother and the infant smiling at her breast, happy in its insensibility to danger, have equally fallen the

* This sounds so much like the language of fancy, or exaggeration at least, that it may perhaps be reckoned as such; but every expression here, and through the whole of this description, is drawn from particular and known instances: and instances that occurred not unfrequently. The author himself remembers well, hearing a young man declare with what pleasure he would kill his brother, who had taken an opposite side, with some circumstances of aggravation.

It is a well-known instance, that in an engagement, or rather I believe, in the general rout after the battle was decided, a man having run one of the enemy through the body, when he fell, and turned up his expiring eyes, he found it was his own father.

victims

victims of brutal rage and undistinguishing violence. And no age, no sex, no character, has been able to prove a security. Why should I mention the unrestrained licentiousness of plunder, the extinction of fortunes and families, the devastation of whole provinces? How many do we see reduced from the highest affluence and prosperity, to the lowest degree of distress and want? The fond parents who had flattered themselves with the pleasing prospect of giving their children a liberal and virtuous education, and of seeing them settled in the world in wealth and happiness, find in a moment all their flattering prospects vanished; and instead of them, should their unfortunate offspring happily escape the rage of the sword, they can foresee nothing for them but poverty, distress, and wretchedness. Why should I here add the wilful destruction even of that property which cannot be converted into use by plunder? and fire and sword, rapine and murder, with wanton licentiousness, desolating and laying waste the land*.

Insult

* As the whole picture here presented is intended for a warning-piece; and many of those whom it is chiefly meant to influence, are more likely to feel the force of facts

D

than

Insult has been added to cruelty, the strongest

than of sentiment or reasoning, it may not be improper to descend to some particular instances of wanton burning, devastation, and cruelty.

The Author remembers well on his first arrival in the country, before his landing, to have seen all the houses on the opposite coast of Carolina in flames in the middle of the day ; wantonly set on fire by people who had gone on shore from the ships in the river ; even though those houses belonged to people who were then friendly to, and acting with, the British government. Such is the undistinguishing licentiousness of civil war.

Even when no military operations were immediately carrying on, it was a common practice for opposite parties, in the night, wantonly to set fire to the houses and plantations of whole districts.

One evening some suspicious parties had been observed on the opposite side of the river on which Savannah stood : about dark, a party of the garrison were sent over the river to discover who they were, and what their designs. They had been imprudent enough to light a fire, and were carousing around it, till it should be late enough to put their insidious purpose in execution. The light of their fire enabled the other party, who were in the dark, to approach near enough, unobserved, to discharge a volley of shot among them with full effect. Several were killed and wounded, and some taken ; the rest made their escape to the woods by favour of the night. From those that were taken they learned, that their design was, in the night to set fire to the Commissary's stores and the plantations on the river, by which the garrison were supplied with forage and fresh provisions ; that they were in concert with another party, who were at the same time to set fire to the Governor's plantations on the opposite side of the town.

Upon

est sentiments and feelings of nature have
been

Upon this, information was immediately sent to town, but too late to prevent the success of the other party ; before the messenger could announce the design, the flames blazing full in sight proclaimed the execution. The writer of this had seen these valuable plantations, in about the space of a year, built from still former ruins, burnt to the ground, rebuilt, and burnt again, with all their buildings, stores, and produce, to the amount of many thousand pounds each time.

Next morning an officer (Lieutenant Ford, of the 7th regiment) was sent over the river to search the woods for the remains of the party, who had been surprized overnight. He found several, who had dropped and died of their wounds, others not yet dead : one in particular, shockingly mangled with shot, but still able to speak. He expressed the most bitter regret at having suffered himself to be drawn into those steps which had brought him to his present wretched condition : but what seemed to give him the most poignant anguish, was the recollection of his wife and children, whom he had been so inconsiderately persuaded to leave, to join in this expedition :—could he but again see his dear wife and children !—and still as he mentioned his wife and children, he seemed to be insensible of his own situation.—He was past all possibility of life—whether he desired the officer to dispatch him, I am not certain.—After talking some time, the officer bade him commit his soul to heaven—and then ordered one of the soldiers who stood by, to dispatch him with a shot, which he did.—This he termed a *coup de grace*. To the man it certainly was a kindness, and the officer certainly intended it so : for though of a sufficiently excentric character, inhumanity is, I believe, no feature of it.

This relation I had from the officer himself immediately after his return.

been contemned*, the most sacred rights of humanity have been spurned and trampled upon,

Take one instance more :

On the day the British evacuated the Province of Georgia—a day on which thousands, men, women, and children, were for ever to abandon their homes and habitations, to wander as outcasts in the earth ; to resign to an insulting enemy, their houses, lands, and possessions, that had descended to them through generations.

En quo discordia cives

Perduxit miseros————

See the wretched issue of civil discord.—On that day, walking on the Bluff of Savannah, I observed Macgilvery's fine plantation all burst out in flames, not an object on it capable of burning, but what seemed on fire. General Clerk, the commander in chief in the province, came up to me, and asked if I knew, or had heard, by whom it had been set on fire ; I told him, that it was supposed to have been done by the people that were leaving it, in despite to those who might come after : he said, it was very wrong, and he was exceeding sorry for it ; and indeed he seemed to feel still more concern than he expressed.

I mention this, because on such occasions, reflections are often thrown on those in command, not only for what is done without their knowledge, but what is done against their express intentions and orders ; which was directly the case here, as it was an implied, if not express, agreement, that the one party should depart without committing any wanton devastation, and that the other should not attempt or harrafs them in their departure.

* The following I must relate somewhat at length, as it will shew the spirit with which revenge and murder are pursued in a civil war.

When

upon, even the repositories of the dead have
been

When the province of South Carolina had submitted to the British government in the year 1780; one man, whose name I have forgot, with a party, held out upon one of the islands, and committed frequent depredations on the neighbourhood: he was long forborne with, and invited to surrender, but in vain, he still continued his depredations. At last, a Captain Pandervice, of the militia, was sent against him, with orders to bring him in, dead or alive. He opposed the landing of the party, and, I believe, killed or wounded some of the men—they, however, made their landing good; upon which he and his party took to flight. Captain Pandervice, being an active, spirited young man, was himself foremost in the pursuit, and fired a running-shot, which took place, and wounded the other mortally: the rest of the party surrendered. A nephew of the person who had been killed, upon hearing of his death, declared, that he would be the death of Pandervice.

It was some considerable time after this, that Mr. Pandervice called upon the writer of this, and took him with him into the borders of Carolina, to join him in marriage to a very amiable young lady.—I know not whether the lady had any apprehension or presage of what awaited them, but remember well, that though marriages, in that country in particular, are celebrated with much mirth and gaiety,—I observed the tears trickling down her cheeks the whole afternoon, and sometimes she could scarce confine the bursting pressure that seemed to lie on her spirits. This was so observable that I could not help asking why it was so particular with her on so happy an occasion (for it was a match entirely of mutual affection)—She seemed sensible of the attention; and made an effort to shew a more chearful and happy appearance, but in vain.

Soon

been violated, and not their ashes, but their yet undissolved bodies insulted, mangled, and
and

Soon after this they left her fathers house, where they were married, and went to Mr. Pandervice's plantation further up the country, on the river May.—Here they had not been long, when one morning Mrs. Pandervice looking out at the window observed some people gliding backwards and forwards through the trees in a wood that fronted the house,—she was immediately alarmed, and told her husband, who plainly perceived they were armed men, and watching the house: suspecting their designs, he came down stairs and thought to escape into the woods behind the house. But before he could get out of doors, the man mentioned before to have vowed his death, at the head of his party was close up to the house—he tried to run round the end of the house—but the other called out to him, Pandervice, you need not run, you must die;—he was unarmed,—but turning round, he said, if I must die, I will die like a man; and walked up directly in front of the other, who waited till he was close to the muzzle of his gun, which he discharged full into his breast, under the very eyes of his wife, screaming in distraction, at the window above,—he was dead in an instant.

The writer is sorry he cannot recollect the name of this wretch, which ought to be handed down to eternal detestation.

Pandervice was a fine young man, seemingly between twenty-five and thirty years of age, above six feet high, of a pleasing open countenance, and rather an elegant presence and mien.

These are the effects of throwing society loose from the restraint and protection of government and laws. Here we see the fate to which every man's life and property is exposed, the moment that the bond of civil union is broken.

The

sported with *. Why should I deplore the unhappy effects that the frequency of such scenes of horror and barbarity must have upon the human heart and disposition itself? Which thus become familiar to inhumanity and pitiless deeds; its social and sympathetic feelings, the best part of our nature, blunted or lost: the heart must become callous and insensible to the misery of our species, and the very principles of humanity, the seeds

The above are but a few of the innumerable instances of the same nature that fell under the author's own observation.

* This is still no exaggeration. The author had the following from persons of character, who were witnesses to the scene:—That in Charles-Town, South Carolina, when one party had lost, and the other gained, possession of the place, the tomb of one of the principal families, in which some of the family had lately been buried, was broken up, and the bodies dragged out, torn to pieces, and thrown about in the grounds. Nor was this a singular instance.

It were superfluous to mention by what party such shocking scenes were exhibited, they were so frequent in both parties, that they might be thought to vie with one another. But it is only justice, to observe in general, that such instances of barbarity and inhumanity as are alluded to in the whole of this description, were more frequently committed by the country people, by the enraged inhabitants and neighbours upon one another, than by the armies on either side.

of

all virtue and goodness, be totally extirpated from the human breast.

Of these deplorable effects strong symptoms too evidently begin to shew themselves; nay, the contagion seems already so far advanced as to have reached even those hearts to which sympathy and pity might be thought most congenial, and on which we might hope to find the tender feelings of humanity most deeply impressed. But we are already so perfectly reconciled to savageness and barbarity, so thoroughly inured to blood and slaughter, that even the tender sex, whose most amiable characteristic is to be shocked at the recital, and to shrink from the view, of violence and outrage, so far forget the delicacy, not to say the decency, of their nature, as to contemplate scenes of carnage and horror with as much indifference, I may even say pleasure, as the soldier, the necessity of whose situation obliges him to bear a part in, and be familiar with such scenes *. Thus inured to cruelty and ruthless

* Take the following instance:—At a table where a number of ladies and gentlemen of Georgia were at dinner, a bullock's heart was brought in hot from the kitchen. Some of the company observed, what a fine dish it was,
upon

less deeds, the heart petrified, the tender and humane affections extinguished, ferocity and savageness is in danger of becoming the characteristic of our land: a land once so distinguished for humanity and hospitality.

upon which a lady present said, that one object only could be a more agreeable sight, that was a *Tory's heart in the same situation*. Being asked, of all her Tory acquaintances, whose heart she would most wish to see in that situation? she named one of the principal men of the province, a gentleman of a very worthy and respectable character, who was then expelled the country on account of his attachment to government.

It was certainly a very mild yet severe rebuke that the lady, who was said to have made this speech, received on the gentleman's return at the re-establishment of the British government in the province. He waited on her, and told her, that as he understood ~~she~~ she had expressed such a particular regard for his heart, he should order when he died, that it might be sent her, and she might have it served up in the most desirable way she could devise. And this, as I know the gentleman well, I dare say he did with perfect good humour, and without any degree of resentment; though, perhaps, not without some degree of detestation and contempt. The lady, it is said, wept bitterly, and denied that she had ever made such a speech: and there might be some mistake in the person to whom the speech was imputed; of the fact and circumstances there is not a doubt.

Many instances of the depravation of female sentiment and feeling equally unnatural, and more seriously shocking and mortifying to humanity, fell within the author's own observation. the above he did not know till some time after the composing of this discourse, and, consequently, could not allude to it.

E

Why

Why should I further mention all law and order despised and trampled upon; a boundless flood of immorality, of guilt and crimes overflowing the land, and bearing down every thing in its course: the very name and form of religion almost lost: which must soon be followed by the contempt of every civil and moral obligation, every sacred bond of society. And though we would not, after the manner of some, arrogate to ourselves the prerogative of Heaven, nor presume to point its judgments, to launch its bolts, or decide upon all its dispensations here below: yet we may certainly, without presumption, adopt the pathetic language of sacred Writ, and say, "For these things the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land; because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood! Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish."

But let it be remembered, that all this train of distress and misery, of guilt and crimes, originated in the violation of the
established

established government of the country; and has been wrought up to its present atrociousness by the universal contempt of that divine institution, which the Sovereign of Nature has ordained for the security and happiness of mankind. For, as before observed, his eternal laws can never be broke through with impunity; but will certainly be followed with a punishment, great and dreadful, in proportion to their great and interesting importance. It is owing to the breach of this sacred institution that your children are fatherless and your matrons widows, that your virgins are violated *, and your youth slain with the sword: it is for the contempt of this divine order, that your fields are uncultivated, and your houses consumed with fire, that your country is ravaged, and your cities in ruins; that your land is depopulated, and drenched with the blood of its inhabitants: it is for this, that you “flee
 “from the sword; from the drawn sword,
 “and from the bent bow, and from the

* There are some scenes so shocking to nature, that it is necessary to throw a veil over them, and fit they should be hid for ever from human sight: otherwise particular instances and facts of the most atrocious violence even of this nature, might be condescended on, attended with circumstances at which humanity shudders.

“grievousness of war:” it is for this, that the hand of the Lord is heavy upon you, and his severer judgments are still impending over you.

Look at your habitations—they are the shattered wrecks of war*:—Go but beyond
your

* This, and what follows, may perhaps be thought rather the painting of a warm imagination, than a description of realities; but the truth is, no description or painting can do justice to the original scene. During the siege of Savannah by the French and Americans, under the Count D’Estaing, the houses were so torn to pieces by the enemy’s artillery, that many were left mere ruins; several were set on fire by the shells, and entirely consumed; and it is not known, that one house in the whole place escaped undamaged. And to one unaccustomed to such scenes, the whole, some time after the siege, had the most melancholy face of desolation and wretchedness that can be imagined. And though but few lives were lost on our part by the enemy’s fire, almost every man being in the trenches, and the women and children in cellars, or other places under ground; yet some instances highly shocking occurred: a few of which on the motive already given for enlarging these notes, I shall mention.

A woman was standing in her own door, with one arm leaning on her daughter’s shoulder, when a barshot came and divided the daughter quite in two, under the horror-struck mother’s arm. Sir James Wright, the governor, told me, that he happened to be passing in front of the same house at the time, and was struck to the ground by the impetus, or wind, of the same shot, though without its even grazing his body: when he recovered, the first object he
saw,

your gates, and at every step you tread upon a grave* :—Walk round your walls—it is an Aceldama,

saw, was the mother clasping the mangled fragments of her daughter.

One night, two gentlemen, who happened not to be in the trenches, and were in bed in the same room; when the firing and shells became exceedingly violent, one of them leaped out of bed, and a shell coming through the house at that instant, took him so directly, that it might rather be said to have annihilated, than to have killed him; I believe, only his heart was found in a remote corner of the room: the other gentleman, who was still in bed, was not hurt.

The following was not so fatal, and is only mentioned because it happened in the house, and to the family where the writer afterwards lodged for some time, and had occasion to mark the vestiges of it. One night, when the firing and bombardment was very hot, a widow woman with four daughters, one of them an infant about five or six years old, were all in the cellar for safety: a shell was heard crashing down the end of the house, which was of wood, instantly it lodged in the ground;—burst with all its ruins into the cellar—all was dark—each thought herself the only person surviving.—The mother and three eldest daughters soon answered one another, and extricated themselves out of the ruins, but the child could neither be heard nor felt—a light was got as soon as possible, it was not to be seen—but its voice was soon heard under the ruins—it was dug out with all possible exertion, and was found not only alive, but what is surprising, not materially hurt.

* This is so literally true, that the ground every where round Savannah was at that time nothing but a place of graves;

Aceldama, a scene of carnage, a field of blood. Thousands of your species, the victims of your crimes, are festering under your feet, the heaven above you is contaminated with slaughter! The air you breathe is tainted with human putrefaction! And in the awful judgments of Heaven, the very corruption of the slain made the means of avenging their blood, and of punishing your crimes*. What awful, what alarming, yet unre-

graves; nor was it possible to walk beyond the buildings on any side without walking over numbers of them. And from the negligent manner in which many were interred, the soil being light, had been blown off by the wind, or carried away by the water, and the bodies lay partly exposed to view.

* "Is this the flight of Fancy? Would it were!"—Beyond the lines of Savannah, on the ground where the French and Americans were defeated, the slain being thrown into holes by hundreds; and the cold, which soon after set in, and was that winter particularly severe, having suspended the putrefaction for some time; on the return of the violent heat in the spring, it was so sudden and excessive, that the corruption of the dead bodies was seen fermenting, above the surface of the ground. And in a short time the places where the dead had been thrown in in such heaps, from being before raised considerably above the ground around it, sunk many feet below it: what a mass of noxious exhalation must hence have arisen to taint the circumambient air! Which there naturally heavy and stagnant from the surrounding swamps and marshes, and in the summer little agitated with winds, is with good reason supposed

unregarded proofs of the divine displeasure !*

“ and for all this, his anger is not turned
“ away, but his hand is stretched out still.

“ I have sent among you the pestilence after

“ the manner of Egypt, your young men

“ have I slain with the sword, and I have

“ taken away your horses; and I have made

“ the stink of your camps to come up into

“ your nostrils; yet have ye not turned unto

“ me, saith the Lord.”

posed to have occasioned the great sickness and mortality that followed in the ensuing spring and summer. Which was so universal, that scarce a person in the place escaped sickening; the troops, especially the Germans, died by hundreds; the small-pox raged with mortal violence among all ranks and ages, particularly among the blacks; who had fled thither in great numbers from Carolina, and for want of necessaries and attendance might be seen dead, and dying, in every shade and hovel. And though little regarded there, where they are scarce considered as part of the human species, were to the truly humane heart and eye most pitiable and distressing objects. Thus the noxious effluvia, from such a quantity of human putrefaction, tainting the air, increased the sickness and mortality: again the sickness, mortality, and negligent interment, especially of the soldiers and negroes, increasing the noxious effluvia, the calamity continued with unremitting violence, till the return of winter purified the air, and in some degree relieved the inhabitants.

* O ye mad, infatuated, impious inhabitants of this land, mark into what an abyss ye are so impatient to plunge yourselves !

But

But all these are the judgments by which the Sovereign of Nature vindicates his authority, and punishes the violation of that sacred good-order which he has ordained through all his works; but which he has in no instance fixed so inviolably sacred, as in that of civil government: for all these are the natural, the certain and unavoidable consequences of the contempt and breach of that important and interesting Institution.

With this scene of confusion, distress, and misery, let us now contrast the blessings and happiness of peace, good-order, and regular government. And if we look back but a few years, the same theatre which now presents the calamitous scene we have just been contemplating, will also supply the counterpart of the contrast.

But who can, without the sincerest pity and regret, look back to the late happy and flourishing state of this country; to that time when we could sit every man under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, in perfect peace and security; when we could go out and come in in safety, could lie down and had none to make us afraid; when nothing but peace, prosperity, and happiness
was

was seen in our land. When our fields were thriving with culture and our pastures were clothed with flocks, when commerce was free and uninterrupted, and wealth in copious streams poured in upon us; and when law and regular government secured to every man the full possession, and free enjoyment of his property. When universal friendship and hospitality were the acknowledged characteristics of our country, and every blessing that our hearts could desire, or our senses enjoy, was within our reach; when Heaven itself seemed to smile benignant upon us, and Providence to pour profusely all its bounty and best blessings into our bosom.

These, and many more than I can at present enumerate or describe, were the blessings which this country once enjoyed under the influence of a mild and benign regular government; and these are the blessings which it is still in our power to enjoy under the same government, if we will not persist madly and wantonly to spurn them, and cast them from us.

And what can the boldest advocate for the continuance of the present anarchy and confusion advance, to be put in competition

F

with

with these blessings? Even could their boasted independence be allowed to be preferable; when will the most sanguine among them say that they can hope to see it established? The perseverance and efforts already made by that power with whom they have to contend, shew plainly how determined they are in the contest. And by the present posture of affairs it appears, that her vigour is so far from being exhausted by these efforts, that it seems to be renewed with every new enemy she has to contend with; and to increase more than in proportion to every increased occasion that calls it forth*.

So

* As affairs afterwards fell out, the above passage may perhaps justly be thought to bring in question the judgment of the author. But if the time when this discourse was composed, and the situation of affairs at that time are attended to, they will, I believe, be allowed fully to justify what is said. Within a few months previous to the composing of this discourse, Spain had openly joined the confederacy against Britain, and Admiral Rodney had already defeated their fleet, taken and destroyed a number of their ships and made their admiral himself prisoner. D'Estaing had been defeated with great slaughter before Savannah, and obliged to return home with the shattered wrecks of his ruined fleet and army. The account of the surrender of Charles-Town, and in consequence, the recovery of the whole province of South Carolina, had just reached Savannah; and at this particular period the Americans themselves seemed to think
their

So that should the unhappy contest be persisted in, what miseries must still await this wretched country! what torrents of blood must yet be shed! when may we hope to see an end to our woes!

Influenced by these considerations, let us each, setting every selfish view and partial purpose aside, permit the fate of our country to touch our hearts; and in our several stations and capacities exert our unfeigned endeavours for her preservation, by the speedy restoration, and effectual establishment of peace, good-order, and legitimate government.

For this Honourable Assembly, whose present meeting (may it be auspicious!) is the occasion of this discourse; as every member of it has been longer, and more intimately acquainted with the scenes which suggested this subject than he who now addresses them has been*, he will not presume to offer any

their affairs desperate. From what cause matters have since fallen out so much otherwise is foreign to the present point: though we may venture to affirm that the cause is not to be found in the nature and situation of affairs at that time, but in the weakness and ignorance, the folly and misconduct of men and measures both at home and abroad.

* The author had then been but a very short time in the province.

thing to their particular consideration ; nor suppose that there is one among them, who has not weighed those subjects with more judgment and attention than he can have done, and who does not feel all their importance ; and hence, we will presume, presents himself here, in his present capacity, with an unbiaſſed intention of promoting, to the utmost of his power, the welfare of those in whose behalf he bears his public character, the happiness of this country in general, and the interest of that government, under whose auspices this Honourable Assembly is held.

What then remains, but that to further our own impartial exertions we invoke the aid and assistance of that Omnipotent Being, whose blessing alone maketh purposes to prosper, and who at his pleasure bringeth to nought the counsels of men, and maketh the devices of the people of none effect. That we beseech him to counsel our counsellors, to teach our senators wisdom, and to order and direct all their deliberations and purposes to general good, to promote and maintain public tranquillity and happiness : that by his blessing they may be effectual to the restoring of peace
and

and good order to this province, may further the same desirable event in every part of this distracted country; and contribute to the quieting, I may say, of more than half the habitable world, now groaning under all the horrors and calamities of war, through the malignant influence of our unnatural broils. Let us then humbly implore Him, who alone can bring good out of evil, order out of confusion, that by his over-ruling providence he may cause the present disorder and anarchy to terminate in the permanent good and happiness of these realms; and in rendering the blessings of peace, and the beneficent intercourse of human society, as extensive and universal, as the pernicious influence of the interruption and violation of them has been. That he would so shed his benign influence on our hearts, that our disorderly and malignant passions, the cause of all our woes, being subdued to reason, and converted to goodness, we may all, with candid hearts and unbiassed aim, conspire to promote the desirable event of restoring and maintaining public peace, good order, and happiness. That laying aside all insincerity and deceit, all prejudice and malice, all rancour
and

and resentment, we may again love as brethren, again be pitiful and courteous one towards another.

Thus, under the Divine Protection and Blessing, we may again hope to recover that happy and flourishing state, which we so lately enjoyed; for which we may pray in the language of the Psalmist, and say, “ O
 “ Lord, save us, and deliver us from the
 “ hand of strange children, whose mouth
 “ talketh of vanity, and their right hand
 “ is a right hand of iniquity: That our
 “ sons may grow up as the young plants,
 “ and that our daughters may be as the
 “ polished corners of the temple: That our
 “ garners may be full and plenteous with
 “ all manner of store: That our sheep may
 “ bring forth thousands and ten thousands
 “ in our streets: That our oxen may be
 “ strong to labour: That there be no decay,
 “ no leading into captivity, and no
 “ complaining in our streets. Happy are
 “ the people that are in such a case; yea,
 “ blessed are the people who have the Lor’
 “ for their God.”

A P P E N D I X.

THE design of publishing the preceding discourse at this time, is by a display of the horrors and miseries of civil disorder to warn the people of this country against rashly rushing into them. And as that spirit of licentiousness which seems so widely diffused among the weak and ignorant, has chiefly arisen from some late delusive political publications which have been industriously circulated through the country, I shall here add a few observations on the subjects of these writings: especially as they are plausibly adapted to impose on superficial understandings, and insidiously conveyed to the hands of those who are least capable of judging of their contents, and the consequences to which they may lead. Nay, so indefatigable are those spreaders of sedition, that besides the pernicious effects of their writings, they have their busy agents in town and country, who propagate

propagate the same notions from house to house, through every family : to whom St. Paul's character may with great propriety be applied, "Traitors—that creep into "houses and lead captive silly women*." That abuses have crept into the British Government none will pretend to deny; and that many of these may be, nay must, and will be redressed, there cannot be a doubt. It will not even be denied that many things pointed at in those writings are real abuses, and call loudly for redress; but it is plain from the spirit in which those publications are written, that their design is not to procure a redress of those abuses, but to make them a pretence for totally subvert-

* It is within this hour, that my landlady, a very worthy woman, who a week ago entertained very different notions, came into my room; from whom, *stans pede in uno*, I had the whole list of Mr. Paine's abuses and grievances, with the very unreasonable hardships of them. The extravagance of a million a year for the King—such great sums sent out of the country into Hanover—Noblemen having pensions of thousands a year for nothing—were all particularly touched upon. I smiled at my good landlady, and told her I found she had got the whole story by heart. Now, though Mr. Paine's writings had for some time been on my table, there, I believe, they might have lain for years and done no harm; but all this new light, I found, was the effect of a visit from a gentleman who had called upon her from a distant part of the town.

ing

ing the constitution. Their direct tendency is entirely to dissolve the bonds of society, to excite the people to throw off all the restraints of law and government, and to reduce this happy country to the same wretched state that France is now in, and the still more wretched one that awaits her: all the horrors of a civil war, all that scene of universal rapine, devastation, and slaughter presented in the preceding pages.

And as this is the direct tendency of these writings, so it is also the evident design with which they are written. Let any one only mark the general spirit and prevailing character that runs through them, and he will find two predominant features by which they are particularly distinguished; vanity, a high conceit of the Author's political capacity and writings with an unconquerable spite and malice against the British Government. So strongly prevalent is this malignant spirit, that the Author can scarce conceal or suppress it through a single page; but especially whatever brings Mr. Pitt to view, is sure to rouse all its wrath, and call forth all its venom: "Mr. Pitt is not arrived at the degree of a school-boy" in politics and finance, compared

G

with

with this all-accomplished adept, in the affair of the regency we were all perfectly ignorant, entirely wide of the mark, but Mr. Pitt, still more than any one else: this we have affirmed three different times in less than half a page. "The principles which Mr. Pitt maintained on the contrary side, were as bad, or worse in their extent, than those of Mr. Fox"—"Mr. Pitt was further from the point than Mr. Fox"—"Mr. Fox took the hereditary ground, and Mr. Pitt the parliamentary, and Mr. Pitt took the worst of the two *."

And when we consider the matter attentively, this unconquerable antipathy to Mr. Pitt is by no means difficult to be accounted for; for certainly no man has contributed so much to render his design impracticable as that gentleman has done. When we emerged out of the American war the British empire was considered by all as on the very brink of ruin: Ten years have not since elapsed, yet we see it in a more happy, more flourishing, and more prosperous situation than it ever stood in before: and all this it must be allowed in a great measure owing the capacity and integrity, the public zeal and unwearied exertion of that gentleman;

* Rights of Man, Part I. page 67. Small edition.

it is then no wonder that Mr. Paine should be highly provoked to find such an obstacle in the way of his design of subverting our constitution.

These writings at first sight, it must be confessed, have a shew of plausibility; but when they come to be closer examined, they will be found to consist chiefly of bold unqualified assertions perfectly unfounded—of sophistry substituted for reasoning and argument—and of wild and chimerical schemes of Government absolutely impossible to be reduced into practice. Of the first of these, bold assertions, some specimens may be found above; of the second, sophistry substituted for argument, we might almost take any proposition through the Author's works at random: I shall therefore take the first that occurs, with which he sets out in his *Common Sense*, "To say that the commons is a check upon the king, presupposes that the commons are wiser than the crown; but as the same constitution gives afterward the king a power to check the commons, it again supposes that the king is wiser than those whom it has already supposed to be wiser than him. A mere absurdity." As Bassanio says in the play, "Is this any
G 2 " thing

“thing now?” when Gratiano advanced, that

—— Silence is only commendable,

In a neat's tongue dri'd, and a maid not vendible *.

we have at least a smart saying for our attention; but here after all our attention we find nothing but mere words: which to attempt to refute by reasoning, were just as hopeful an undertaking, as to attempt to kindle a fire by the collected rays of the moon.

I also will state my proposition, and it shall at least be as self-evident, and as fully conclusive as Mr. Paine's.—A gentleman harnesses a pair of horses to his phaeton, with intent to travel into the country; which presupposes the horses to be stronger than the man; but as the same gentleman afterwards puts reins to the horses, with intent to stop and turn them as he pleases,—this again supposes the man to be stronger than the horses, which we had already supposed to be stronger than he. A mere absurdity certainly. Yet, trusting to this absurdity, men have travelled the road with safety for thousands of years; and trusting to the other absurdity, the British Constitution has secured happiness and prosperity

* Merchant of Venice.

to millions, for more ages, I will venture to predict, than any of those which he is so fond to recommend in its stead will do years. Were kings and commons, men and horses, mere machines, the above propositions would both be perfectly conclusive; and till they are such, they are both perfectly without meaning.

Indeed, Mr. Paine, in all his speculations, seems entirely to have forgot a very essential and operative part of human nature, the passions. He takes it for granted, that man is a purely rational being; at least that when we have abolished all law and government, and adapted his new system, this will be the case, and the people will all be regenerated with the government. There will then be no danger of mobs and rioters, when set loose from all the fears and restraints of laws, going one step beyond the exact bounds of reason and justice; nor of self-raised demagogues without law, running into any of those abuses of power which the best laws cannot altogether prevent even in those who act under their authority. And of all this the present state of France is frequently referred to as an incontrovertible proof.

Another

Another of this gentleman's propositions, of which he is particularly fond, is, that all hereditary government is an absurdity, and an imposition on mankind, because it is a government for posterity, and we have no right to impose a government on posterity. Now does not every man of common sense see, that this conclusion is of equal force against all laws and legislation whatever? For all laws are made for posterity; that is, they are made on purpose to operate *after* they are made: yet the laws we make, or the government we settle, can no more bind the people of tomorrow, than those of a thousand years hence. The truth of the case is this; we neither can bind posterity by any laws we may make, nor subject them to any government we may settle. Not only posterity, but every successive legislature, every succeeding act of the same legislature, may repeal every one that went before it. What then? Is it therefore absurd and an imposition on mankind to make laws at all? By no means. Laws that are made by a proper sanction, are in force till they are repealed by an equal sanction: and a government settled by the general or national consent of any people, is of force till it be altered

altered by the same general or national consent of the people. And though every government have a right to alter their laws; and every people have a right to alter their government by general consent, when they shall see sufficient reasons for so doing; yet till the one and the other are altered by the proper authority, they bind those that shall live under them a thousand years hence, as well as those who lived the first day they were in force, with all the authority that a human sanction can give, or that a divine sanction can give to human institutions.

Neither hereditary nor representative government can bind the will, or take away the power, of the people of tomorrow, more than they can that of latest posterity. Both may equally, if they chose it, set aside what their predecessors have done; and the sanctions of hereditary and of representative government are of equal force, till they are set aside by the same authority from which that force was derived. But before any sober people will think of altering the constitutional foundations of their government, they must see very strong and urgent reasons indeed for so doing; and if they have any acquaintance with the history of mankind,
and

and know what it is to loosen the bands of society, they will take effectual care not to unsettle that which is in being, till that which is to succeed it be known to be in full force to supply its place. Otherwise, they act just as reasonable a part, as he, who finding his house not altogether convenient, should pull it down on the approach of winter, without having provided any other to shelter himself and his family in against the storms.

I remember this same argument of Mr. Paine's, or something like it, being started in both houses of parliament on Mr. Pitt's bringing in the bill for restraining the accumulation of national debt: and I was at that time surprised, that men of such clear conceptions as the late Chancellor, and, I believe, Mr. Fox, could have recourse to an argument that was either a mere sophistry, or of equal force against every act that could be proposed in either house: It is true, it was soon dropped there, as even those who advanced it were, no doubt, fully sensible of its sophistry; the case is so much otherwise with Mr. Paine, and he has recourse to the above arguments so often, that one would almost be tempted to think, that he himself
really

really believed there was something in them ; or at least, thought that he could so far impose upon those for whom he writes, as to make them believe so.

As to the above bill, I cannot resist the occasion to say, that in my opinion it was one of the most necessary, and as far as it can operate, one of the most important that ever passed the legislature : as it appears an almost unavoidable consequence, that by wars succeeding wars, the unbounded accumulation of national debt must finally subvert the government of this country. And notwithstanding present reports, appearances, and preparations, it is sincerely to be hoped we shall have no war at this time, as nothing certainly could be more unfortunate for this country.

But to resume our subject.—The main point at which all Mr. Paine's writings aim, is to persuade the people of this country to dissolve their present system of government, and to substitute a purely Republican or Democratic system in its stead. Now if Mr. Paine be really sincere in this advice, his own writing plainly shew him to be ignorant of the first principle of all political knowledge, which is, that the constitutional form and

H

system

system of every government must be founded in, and have respect to the manners and character of the people. And virtue and simplicity, even severity, of manners is the essential foundation upon which alone a Republican Government possibly can be formed; or subsist, when it is formed. Without political virtue at least, no Republic ever did, or ever can subsist. And therefore to propose to form a pure and perfect Republic out of the people of a long corrupted, luxurious, and licentious monarchy, as this presumptuous dabbler in politics does, is just as wise, and as practicable, as to propose to form a brilliant birth-day dress out of materials collected in Rag-fair.

History universally proves, that even where a Republican Government has been originally settled, as the manners of the people have grown licentious and corrupt, they have constantly sunk, either into Aristocratic, or into Despotic Governments: and the more purely Democratic they are, when they have once become corrupted, the more certainly, and the more suddenly, will this be the case. An instance to the contrary of this general observation is not, I believe, to be found in the history of human society.

And

And if this has universally become the case, even when Republics have been originally formed of people of pure and simple manners; what greater exhibition of folly could possibly be devised, than to propose to form a Democratic Government out of a Monarchical Government already far advanced in luxury, licentiousness, and corruption? And what could more nearly border on madness, than the attempt to put such a proposal in practice? Did this proposition require any proof, we have a strong, and a ready one, in the only attempt of the kind that ever was made, the present state of France.

The history of Rome affords a striking proof of the impossibility of a Republican Government subsisting, even where it has been long established, after the people are grown licentious and corrupt. It was not the power or ambition of Sylla, or Cæsar, of Anthony or Octavius, that subverted the Roman Republic: they only took advantage of the occasion to make themselves masters of a Republic that was no longer capable of subsisting in that form; because public virtue and severity of manners, the sole foundation upon which that form of

government could stand was lost. Sylla even restored the Republic, the murderers of Cæsar attempted to do the same; and though the people continued to murder one tyrant after another it had no effect towards re-establishing the Republic. And why? Because that principle, that character, those manners which alone can support a Republican Government were entirely gone. What wretched empirics then must they be, how ignorant both of the nature of man and of governments, who would pretend to form a purely Republican Government upon the present manners of France, or of England, or of most of the present States of Europe. ♣

If we look into the Grecian Republics, they invariably confirm the same important truth, that a Republican Government can never subsist where the people are far advanced in luxury and corruption: they every one fell into slavery, by the corruptness and licentiousness of the people. Sparta subsisted the longest, and with the fewest convulsions; owing to the severity of their manners, and to the popular government being corrected by the Kings, and these again by the Ephori.

The

The Athenians who were the most purely democratic, being a lively and refined people, and retaining long a strong spirit of liberty, recovered themselves oftener even from absolute ruin, than perhaps any other people ever did: yet their whole history is little more than one continued scene of tumults, factions, and convulsions. And they at last fell by the same cause that uniformly has ruined, and uniformly must ruin, all democratic governments, when once the manners and character of the people are corrupted. When the blind licentious populace, out of spite to the wiser and better men of the Republic, put a vain boastful Chares at the head of their fleets and armies, and allowed an Eubulus and a Demades, two ignorant presumptuous demagogues, to influence their councils and direct their conduct, they lost the battle of Cheronæa, which left them entirely at the mercy of Philip, and in its consequences brought all Greece under the Macedonian yoke.

Indeed our conceited interloper in politics, in nothing more betrays his ignorance even of those subjects on which he pretends to dogmatize, than in the unqualified praises
he

he bestows on the Athenian Republic. If any man would see scenes the most shocking to human nature, the highest instances of political phrensy and madness, the most severe and deliberate exercise of insult and cruelty, let him read the history of the Grecian Republics, especially that of Athens, and particularly the Peloponnesian war. If he can find them equalled, it may perhaps be in a scene announced from America in the course of last summer, where 300 Indians, taken prisoners, were every man murdered in cold blood on the field of battle: and this for endeavouring to resist being totally extirpated from their native and original country.

Mr. Paine says, "It signifies not who is minister. The defect is in the system." Mr. Paine still stops short of his object. When he adds, "The foundation and the superstructure of the government is bad." Had he distinguished the foundation from the superstructure, he would have been nearer the truth. The character and manners of the people, is the foundation of every government! and there the defect certainly lies: and till we find a people perfect in these, we can find no perfect government. And except Mr. Paine can reform these to
that

that degree of perfection he proposes in his new system, he prepares a building without a foundation to fix it on : and all his schemes are the more baseless fabric of a vision. Schemes may be very plausible in speculation, that are perfectly impracticable in fact. That, in fact, is the best state of any thing, which is the best the nature of the thing will admit of.

Of systems possible it is confessed,

That wisdom infinite, must form the best.

Yet in this sublunary part, at least, of the system of Nature and Providence we think we see plainly many evils and defects, though it must be supposed the best, consistent with the present nature of things. And happy it is for mortals, that it is beyond the reach of human reform or intermeddling, otherwise I am well convinced, such is Mr. Paine's confidence in his own unerring wisdom, and his propensity to meddle with things beyond his reach, that we should soon see the system of nature as much improved as that of France now is.

In a word, for Britons, in their present enviable situation, to take it into their heads to transfer this country from that high pinnacle of prosperity and happiness at which she

he now stands, to a Republican or Democratic Government; with a view to obtain that visionary political perfection which this busy quack recommends; would be just as reasonable an experiment, as, for a man who had a very sound head of his own, only sometimes subject to a little giddiness, to take a fancy to have it struck off, in order to fix in its stead one which a bold charlatan recommends from his stage; adding, that he has fitted several persons with such heads who were never known to complain of giddiness, or so much as to have a head-ach afterwards.

Such a perfect government, and such a happy state of society as this gentleman describes, were no doubt a very desirable thing: and he takes it for granted that the subversion of our present government could possibly terminate in nothing short of this perfect happiness. Now it were an easy matter to shew, or rather it is already shewn in the preceding discourse, that the very attempt to do it must unavoidably terminate in the direct contrary: in the greatest calamity incident to human society, in all the horrors and misery of civil war. To invent an imaginary situation, and to know that it would
be

be preferable to a real and present existing one, is a very different thing from shewing how we may with safety transfer ourselves out of the one situation into the other, so as to secure all its imagined happiness. A man may persuade us upon very reasonable grounds, that heaven is preferable to earth, and we might give him credit with little danger : but having got us to the top of St. Paul's, and presuming we were become giddy, with our elevation ; should he endeavour to persuade us that it were but an easy step to spring from hence into heaven, and advise us to make the experiment ; we should, I believe, not only hesitate, as doubtful of the event, but begin to be a little suspicious of his designs. The attempt to which Mr. Paine would persuade the people of this country is just as promising, and were the two to be tried, we may venture to pronounce, they would terminate in the same event—a fall never to rise again.

I have mentioned the present prosperous and happy state of this country, and on a theme so inviting I will indulge myself a little.

The increase or decrease of taxes and revenue, have no doubt a considerable influence

ence on the wealth and happiness of the people; and the revenue of this kingdom is, I believe, too lavishly bestowed; that is a subject on which I may touch elsewhere: but still it is not a little, nor even a great deal, more or less expence attending a government, that is the most interesting consideration to those who live under that government, or the best criterion of its value and merits; but it is, the general prosperity and happiness of the inhabitants of the country, and every individual being secure from insult and injury both in his person and property. And upon this issue, the government of this country at present may challenge all that the world now can, or ever could produce. The husbandman and those occupied in agriculture and the trades which it employs, are in every state, justly reckoned the most useful and important class of the people. Let those who would make a true estimate of our happiness, travel the country, go into our villages and farms; observe the farmers, their families, and all that are employed about them, how thriving and happy they are: how comfortably, plentifully, and sociably they live. He must have an insensible heart indeed,

to

to whose own happiness the observation of such pleasing and thriving scenes does not considerably add. And even in the trading and manufacturing towns, it is pleasing to observe how plentifully and comfortably the generality of industrious tradesmen live and keep their families. The Author had occasion to reside some time in such a town, in a remote part of the country, computed to contain between 4000 and 5000 inhabitants; and does not suppose, that 50l. perhaps not 20l. a year, beside voluntary assistance, was expended in supporting the poor; yet no real distressed object was unsupported, if their distress was known. And *there* none but real distressed objects would ask, or even accept of assistance from the parish, from a natural independence, and pride of spirit. Parents support their children, and children support their parents in their age; and almost the only objects that want assistance, are old and sick persons who have no families or near connections to take care of them. But this, it must be observed, was beyond the reach of our poor-laws; the continued operation of which has sunk more than a fifth part of the species in this country below all pretensions to the worth and dignity of the

human character. In the above place, in a general intercourse with all ranks of people, it was pleasing, nay, even surprising, to observe how well every common tradesman's family lived, what a decent and thriving appearance they made, and how chearfully and plentifully they even entertained their friends on particular occasions.

That there is a class, and in this part of the country, a numerous one, that is an exception to these observations, cannot be denied. But whoever will attend carefully this subject, will find that these consist chiefly of persons addicted to idleness and drunkenness, or of the families of such persons. We see many who are perfectly contented if they can find the necessaries of life from day to day, or from week to week : and if they can do this by working two days in the week, will go idle, and be drunk all the rest. Nor is it any concern to them, that should any accident render them incapable of working, or take them from their families, they must immediately come on the parish ; which they unfortunately know is obliged to maintain them. It is from this source, that our parishes are burthened with poor, and our poor-rates increased to such an enormous

enormous height. Whereas even these persons, were they willing, or could they be compelled to work, might in time make a decent provision for their families : we see many, as already observed, in the same rank of life, by industry, frugality, and œconomy, not only living comfortably, but even acquiring substance and wealth. And we may venture to affirm, that notwithstanding the weight of our taxes, and the burden of our poor-rates, there is more wealth possessed, and more happiness enjoyed, by the body of the people in this country, than now is, or ever was, in any country of equal extent within the knowledge or memory of man. And wretched and detestable indeed must he be, who would put to the hazard so much happiness for empty speculation, and experiments which have ever proved fatal. But why do I say put to the hazard? I say, who would persuade to exchange so much happiness for certain and universal devastation and misery.

The above are not mere speculative notions, formed in a sedentary cell; they are drawn from real life, and actual observation, very lately made by the writer
himself

himself from almost one extremity of the island to the other.

It is hoped, that it will not be concluded from any thing advanced in these strictures, that the author is an enemy to a real and safe reform either in the constitution, or administration of government. Though he may doubt, as our manners now are, whether bringing it more into the hands of the lower rank of people may prove a real reform; except an effectual remedy could be found against corruption, and against the licentiousness, idleness, and drunkenness that popular elections always introduce in the country. It might perhaps have some effect to this purpose, to make a law that no man should offer himself a candidate, or solicit a vote for any function conferable by the people, and that a proof of his doing so should be an absolute disqualification: but I am afraid we have not virtue enough left to dare to have recourse to such radical remedies.

Nor when the author mentions corruption and licentiousness of manners and character, would he be thought to mean, that our manners are more depraved than those of other people in the same period of society.

No.

No. He is convinced the people of this country, were they even let loose from all law, restraint, and fear, are as incapable of acting the shocking scenes that France has lately exhibited, as they are of voluntarily submitting themselves to the will of an arbitrary despot: our very highwaymen, foot-pads, and worst banditti would rise up the vindicators of virtue and humanity against such miscreants. He only means, that we are arrived at too advanced a period of society for a Republican or purely Democratic form of Government.

But though not in form, yet in fact, our government is at present is as perfectly democratic as any government possibly can be. The voice and will of the people decidedly known, even now, must, and will, infallibly determine all public measures: No man, no minister, nor the whole Legislature together, will ever pretend to proceed in opposition to this sanction, where it fully and decidedly appears.

What is here advanced might be confirmed by innumerable facts: when the American war was ended, the King in his speech expressly acknowledged, that in putting an end to it he was determined by the voice
and

and will of the people, to which he voluntarily resigned his own sentiments. This, I believe, was also the case in the late preparations for war with the Empress of Russia: even though the minister might perhaps have depended on a majority in both Houses of Parliament, yet the sentiments of the people were perceived, though silently, to be decidedly against it, therefore it was wisely and properly avoided; even though, perhaps, the measure in itself might have been right.

And though it may be difficult, and even dangerous, to have express recourse to the voice of the people individually, there is no difficulty in general in knowing the voice and will of the people; nor any danger from it, if attended to with that deference and respect that is due to so important a sanction. Nor will there be any occasion for mobs, tumults, and riots to discover this will of the people; though it will diffuse itself with the silence of thought, yet it will be heard, and known, as loudly, as certainly, as if thundered from the voices of multitudes. Indeed tumults and riots are so far from discovering the voice of the people, that they may be safely construed into the very reverse: they

they are always the efforts of a faction or party; or else of the very dregs of the people, stirred up by some factious knave or fool, to obtain by violence something directly contrary to the voice and will of the body of the people. The present crisis shews strongly how far tumults and riots are from expressing the sentiments of the people: the disposition to these never perhaps appeared more general, or more dangerous; yet when the people found it necessary to make a discovery of their sentiments, we see how small and contemptible a part of the whole it is, that caused this threatening appearance.

Upon the whole we may say, that though in its exercise the popularity of the government of this country is tempered with aristocracy and monarchy; yet in its spirit and principle, no government can in effect be more a popular government: and no government ever was so much so, with so much safety, and for so long continuance. And in this voice of the people, of which we are speaking, every individual has his proper vote and due influence; and this collective voice is the true and unequivocal voice of the people, which, as we have said before, where it is fully and decisively known, in

K

this

this country always will, and always must direct and determine every public measure.

Hitherto we have spoken of the aim and design of Mr. Paine's writings, so far as they tend to subvert the fundamental principles, and change the essential forms of our Constitution; which every friend to his country, every friend to the good order and happiness of human society ought to execrate. As to those abuses which he points at in the œconomy and administration of our government, many of them I am afraid are too real and well founded to be denied: *pudet hæc opprobria nobis potuisse dici, et non potuisse refelli*. Such abuses the author of these strictures neither means to plead for, nor even to palliate; but many of them we hope may, nay must, and will be remedied, by a regular and rational improvement of government; which must now unavoidably take place in the natural course of things. But what the author would guard against, what he would deprecate as the greatest calamity, is public tumult, riot, and violence. Which Instead of reformation, must prove the entire dissolution, of a government already far advanced in improvement, and diffusing both on its own subjects, and the human race

race in general, more happiness than all that the world besides can present.

And though no man is more sensible of the abuses in every department of the state, both civil and ecclesiastic, though no man feels a more just resentment of them, though no man perhaps has greater personal reason to complain of them, than the writer of these strictures; yet he does not hesitate to say, that it would be no matter of conscience with him, to draw the first trigger in the face of the man, who should dare, at the head of a tumultuous mob, to demand the reformation of even the worst of these abuses.

But if there are, as Mr. Paine represents, useless and insignificant courtiers, and luxurious and licentious noblemen, who, being possessed of thousands a year of their own, have yet thousands more, for mere nominal offices, out of the revenue of a country so burthened with taxes as this is, where even every daily labourer bears a sensible part of them; the abuse is enormous and shameful. And if such noblemen and courtiers have any pretensions either to patriotism or prudence, they will think it high time to make a voluntary sacrifice of such unnecessary, I might almost say, debasing acquisitions, to

the peace and welfare of their country : for it may be depended upon, such palpable abuses cannot be much longer overlooked nor tolerated. And a reform of this nature is much more wanted, and would be of much greater importance to the country, than any parliamentary reform which, however reasonable in itself, and however popular in theory, in its effects in practice might be very doubtful, as the manners of the people now are : except some effectual mode can be found to obviate the pernicious influence of popular elections upon these, and the pernicious influence of these upon popular elections.

Were such places and appointments as we have alluded to, always bestowed upon those who have done real service or honour to their country, it might be some apology, such have certainly a right from the gratitude of the public to an honourable and easy independence : but in this view, those who are possessed of thousands of their own, are out of the question. A thousand a year, with œconomy, even to a family, will supply all that can be necessary either for use or elegance, within the bounds of a natural and uncorrupted taste. And could any estimate be made of the general happiness in

in the world, as influenced by wealth and fortune, it would probably be found, that there is more real happiness enjoyed in situations of fortune under that sum than above it. In many of our overgrown fortunes, a great diminution would, even to the possessors, be a great acquisition; as it might let them down to the level and capacity of rational and natural taste and enjoyments.

One point frequently recurred to in the writings we have been treating of, is, the extravagance of any government bestowing a million a year upon one man. The sum is certainly enormous; but still the matter is misrepresented, no doubt, wilfully in these writings, but, I believe, innocently misconceived by the weak multitude, who have taken it up, not so much even from them, as from those busy agents who are so industrious in propagating the same doctrines. This sum, if I understand the matter rightly, is by no means conferred upon the King personally; but the whole expence of the civil government of the country, and all the splendour of a court are to be supported out of it; and if we take into the consideration the expensiveness of the manners of the times, it may something lessen the seeming
extravagance

extravagance of this article. It would perhaps have some tendency better to reconcile the public to the largeness of this sum, did we oftener hear of popular and worthy acts of royal munificence; especially of literary merit rewarded, and literary characters distinguished; of which, indeed, so few have appeared of late, that it might be difficult to find objects for such munificence.

It is a public misfortune, that the prevailing taste is more for the Arts than for Knowledge or Literature, and that this taste seems to have even the sanction of royal distinction: hence for near half a century past, however we may have improved in Arts, I am afraid we have declined both in Literature and Taste. Yet it is certain that the greatest talents in the Arts can never become in any degree so interesting to the public as very moderate talents in Literature properly applied. Thus we see even such literary talents as those of Mr. Paine capable of more affecting the public, and of doing more mischief, than all the Performers, Artists, Connoscenti, and Delettanti in Europe, were they to unite their efforts, are capable of counteracting. And what wonder is it that we see no literary character disposed

posed or concerned, to counteract it? Our lawyers have more gainful employment: and if our clergy have court interest, or ministerial connections, they may have bishoprics, deanries, prebends, and livings upon livings, without giving themselves any trouble or concern about the public; nay, without either the capacity, or inclination, to serve or support their country, or even their patrons, in any respect: and without the above requisites, the first talents in their professions, nor the highest merit and worth in personal character, will not procure them even the means of subsistence.

Through the whole of these strictures, little notice has been taken of France or America, though so often alluded to in the writing to which they refer. The present wretched state of France must certainly prove a sufficient antidote against the poison of her example; and more strongly than a thousand arguments confirm what we have above advanced, the impossibility of erecting a Republican Government out of the materials of a corrupt, luxurious, and licentious monarchy. And though she may in time recover some settled form of Government, we may venture to say, that she is at present

present many degrees further from it, than when she first threw off the reins of her former government. It might be curious, would the occasion permit, to trace in conjecture the probable steps she has yet to go through before she can have any government. We can already trace her from her original government to the Constituting Assembly—a respectable and well-meaning body. From these to the first Legislative Assembly—very contemptible. To the bloody Municipality of Paris, with the murderous confederates of Marseilles—detestable. To the present collu-vies of demagogues, parricides, and common canaille—execrable. One step yet remains on the *descent*—To regicides, miscreants, demons in human form—infernal. Below this they cannot well descend. In *ascent* we may perhaps trace them—by a civil war, to the officers of the army—to the body of the army—to Dumourier; if he can elude the murderous arts of the Convention. And though he is more likely to act the part of a Cromwell, than of a Monk; yet it is not impossible, but through such steps the government may at last return to a meliorated monarchy, under some of the Bourbon family. Or else, when they have succe-
sively

sively extirpated every person capable of assuming any distinction, and the mere common people actually divided all property; they may be fitter for a Republic, till for want of abilities to conduct it, they become a prey to their surrounding neighbours.

This one thing we may venture to affirm; that the present state of France has given the severest check to the political emancipation of mankind, that human society has sustained since the subversion of the Roman Republic. For, besides the slavery and oppression that such anarchy and ambition must naturally produce, even those who sincerely wished, and earnestly laboured for the emancipation and political melioration of the human race, draw back their hand, and stand aghast, struck with horror at such an ominous and portentous production.

As to America, it is an object so entirely of its own nature, so perfectly different in political situation from every country in the world beside, that no inference drawn from the one, can be depended upon to hold in the other. To point out all the particulars in which it differs, and to trace their effects as more favourable to a Republican Government, would lead into a discussion upon

L

which

which at present we cannot even pretend to enter. I shall only hint at the few following.—The less advanced state of society*.

The

* By the less *advanced* state of society, is not meant here a less advantageous, or less perfect state of society, but the direct contrary. In this respect society after a certain point may be considered as the day after the meridian; the day advances but the sun declines.

And to this degeneracy of overgrown states nothing perhaps contributes more, than the immoderate increase of capitols and great cities; and the infinite depravation of the human race, in the two extremes of high and low life, to which they conduce by the great conflux of people, and of wealth they draw together, and pervert from all the natural ends of their being. Whether the Americans, in morals strictly so called, are better than ourselves I will not pretend to say; but in social and political morals they have greatly the advantage of us. And owing to nothing more than their living mostly in the country, every man on his own lands, and the easy social and hospitable intercourse that is kept up between all ranks of people; so that the highest are not raised above the level of humanity, nor the lowest sunk beneath it.

I have often indulged the conjecture, that were London to be consumed to ashes, only that immense mass of people and property, that are as it were buried and corrupting in it, preserved, and dispersed over the country, it would prove an infinite advantage to the state; and might in all probability protract for some centuries the fate of this empire. Could such an event happen with entire safety to the people and property, even allowing the loss of the buildings,

I am

The more equal possession of property, especially of land. There being no great cities in the country; where an immense mass of people and of wealth get together, tending to boundless and incurable corruption of the species: where numbers, by immeasurable riches, without capacity or taste, to enjoy them, are (allowing their own conception) raised many degrees above all the natural enjoyments, use, and ends of human existence; and still greater numbers sunk by necessity and vice as many degrees below all pretensions to the human character, except in mere external figure. Even those who in other countries supply the lower class of useful citizens, are in America out of this question, as they are of no more account in the scale of society *there*, than the cattle and beasts of burden in European States. What also, among them at first prevented many of the disasters and excess of a dissolved government, was, their having a foreign, yet interant, enemy to contend with from the moment their design appeared. And to all these we may add—the influence of one

I am not certain but “it were a consummation,” or if we may admit a pun where it presents so legitimate a claim,—*a consumation* “devoutly to be wished for.”

great

great and distinguished character, possessing all the public zeal of the patriot, and magnanimity of the hero, without the selfish designs too often found in the one, or the ambition always found in the other. General Washington is perhaps a greater phenomenon in human character, than the American States are in civil politics.

Yet all these causes must every day decline, and whoever sees the American Government as old as the British is, even since the Revolution, will see great changes in it. And whatever name, or form, it may bear, I will venture to say, that in fact even at this day it is more an Aristocratic than a Republican Government: though their Aristocriacy may have more moderation and prudence than to let their predominancy be so much seen and felt as ours do. The Americans seem either to be sensible that their Government must verge towards an Empire; or else they are insensibly preparing the way, both for bringing on, and for exercising the Government rather of a great Empire than of a Republic, by the grand and extensive plan of a capitol they have laid out.

In all probability, that country will one day exhibit the greatest empire that the world

world has seen. And from the enlightened state of society, and the liberal genius of the people, we may hope, one, in which both the principles, and exercises of government will be improved, and made more beneficent to the human race, than in any that have yet borne the name of Empires.

To conclude these strictures, which have already run far beyond their intended bounds. Because there are some defects in the constitution, and some abuses in the exercise, of our government, shall we therefore dissolve the whole system, in hopes of supplying its place by an air-built fabric, proposed by a visionary enthusiast; without considering what may be the consequence of such a rash attempt. Were we on board a shattered vessel in the midst of a stormy sea, we might discern a pleasant Island at a distance, on which we might persuade ourselves, that could we get there, we should be safe from danger: but were it evidently impossible to get there without the almost certainty of dashing our vessel to pieces on the rocks, and ourselves perishing in the waves; rather than run such a desperate hazzard, we would endeavour to repair and strengthen
our

our shattered bark, and try to weather out the storm: we would especially do so, if there were reasons to fear that, what appeared to us a pleasant island, might on approach, prove only a Kraken, or one of those deceptions of the sight, which sometimes, when they have a while deluded the distressed seamen with hopes of land, vanish entirely, after having drawn them into a more dangerous situation than before.

F I N I S.



ERRATA.

Page 12, line 18, for *zealous* read *jealous*.

P. 38, l. 5, from the bottom, for *it* read *them*.

E R R A T A

Page 12, line 12, for various read various.
P. 38, l. 5, from the bottom, for it read them.

